

85. (New) A method for presenting a user with a graphic advertisement in an interactive television program guide implemented on user television equipment, wherein television commercials and other television programming are transmitted to the user television equipment over a communications path from a distribution facility and are displayed for the user on the user television equipment, comprising:

providing the user with an opportunity to access interactive television program guide information from the interactive television program guide by displaying an icon that indicates the availability of the interactive television program guide information during the display of a television commercial associated with a given advertiser; and

displaying the interactive television program guide information and a graphic advertisement associated with the given advertiser in the interactive television program guide for the user when the user accesses the interactive television program guide information in response to the icon.

86. (New) The method defined in claim 85 wherein the television commercial and the graphic advertisement are both branded with the same brand, the method further comprising displaying the graphic

advertisement branded with that brand on the user television equipment.

87. (New) The method defined in claim 85 further comprising retrieving the graphic advertisement from local memory.

88. (New) The method defined in claim 85 further comprising retrieving the graphic advertisement from a remote server.

89. (New) The method defined in claim 85 further comprising retrieving the graphic advertisement from local memory according to a schedule.

90. (New) The method defined in claim 85 further comprising retrieving the graphic advertisement from a remote server according to a schedule.

91. (New) The method defined in claim 85 further comprising retrieving the graphic advertisement from local memory in response to a real-time flag in the commercial.

92. (New) The method defined in claim 85 further comprising retrieving the graphic advertisement from a remote server in response to a real-time flag in the commercial.

93. (New) The method defined in claim 85 further comprising retrieving the graphic advertisement from local memory in response to a real-time vertical-blanking-interval flag in the commercial.

94. (New) The method defined in claim 85 further comprising retrieving the graphic advertisement from a remote server in response to a real-time vertical-blanking-interval flag in the commercial.

95. (New) The method of claim 85 further comprising enabling the user to purchase a product or service using the interactive television program guide.

96. (New) The method of claim 85 further comprising enabling the user to purchase a product or service using the interactive television program guide by displaying a point-of-sale window having information on the product or service in response to a user input when the icon is displayed.

97. (New) The method of claim 85 further comprising enabling the user to purchase a product or service using the interactive television program guide by displaying a point-of-sale window having information on the product or service in response to a user input when the icon is displayed, wherein the point-of-sale window also provides access to other products or services.

98. (New) A system for presenting a user with a graphic advertisement in an interactive television program guide implemented on user television equipment, wherein television commercials and other television programming are transmitted to the user television equipment over a communications path from a distribution facility and are displayed for the user on the user television equipment, comprising:

means for providing the user with an opportunity to access interactive television program guide information from the interactive television program guide by displaying an icon that indicates the availability of the interactive television program guide information during the display of a television commercial associated with a given advertiser; and

means for displaying the interactive television program guide information and a graphic advertisement associated with the given advertiser in the interactive television program guide for the user when the user accesses the interactive television program guide information in response to the icon.

99. (New) The system defined in claim 98 wherein the television commercial and the graphic advertisement are both branded with the same brand, the system further comprising means for displaying the

graphic advertisement branded with that brand on the user television equipment.

100. (New) The system defined in claim 98 further comprising means for retrieving the graphic advertisement from local memory.

101. (New) The system defined in claim 98 further comprising means for retrieving the graphic advertisement from a remote server.

102. (New) The system defined in claim 98 further comprising means for retrieving the graphic advertisement from local memory according to a schedule.

103. (New) The system defined in claim 98 further comprising means for retrieving the graphic advertisement from a remote server according to a schedule.

104. (New) The system defined in claim 98 further comprising means for retrieving the graphic advertisement from local memory in response to a real-time flag in the commercial.

105. (New) The system defined in claim 98 further comprising means for retrieving the graphic advertisement from a remote server in response to a real-time flag in the commercial.

106. (New) The system defined in claim 98 further comprising means for retrieving the graphic advertisement from local memory in response to a real-time vertical-blanking-interval flag in the commercial.

107. (New) The system defined in claim 98 further comprising means for retrieving the graphic advertisement from a remote server in response to a real-time vertical-blanking-interval flag in the commercial

108. (New) The system of claim 98 further comprising means for enabling the user to purchase a product or service using the interactive television program guide.

109. (New) The system of claim 98 further comprising means for enabling the user to purchase a product or service using the interactive television program guide by displaying a point-of-sale window having information on the product or service in response to a user input when the icon is displayed.

110. (New) The system of claim 98 further comprising means for enabling the user to purchase a product or service using the interactive television program guide by displaying a point-of-sale window having information on the product or service in response to a user input when the icon is displayed, wherein the point-

of-sale window also provides access to other products or services.

111. (New) A system for presenting a user with a graphic advertisement in an interactive television program guide comprising:

a display device;

an input device; and

control circuitry configured to:

receive television commercials and other television programming from a distribution facility;

direct the display device to display an icon that indicates the availability of interactive television program guide information during the display of a television commercial associated with a given advertiser;

receive a command from the input device that indicates that the user has accessed the interactive television program guide information in response to the icon; and

direct the display device to display the interactive television program guide information and a graphic advertisement associated with the given advertiser in response to the command being received.

112. (New) The system of claim 111 wherein:
the television commercial and the graphic advertisement are both branded with the same brand; and
the control circuitry is further configured to direct the display device to display the graphic advertisement branded with that brand.

113. (New) The system of claim 111 wherein:
the system further comprises local memory;
and
the control circuitry is further configured to retrieve the graphic advertisement from the local memory.

114. (New) The system of claim 113 wherein:
the control circuitry is further configured to retrieve the graphic advertisement from the local memory according to a schedule.

115. (New) The system of claim 113 wherein:
the control circuitry is further configured to retrieve the graphic advertisement from the local memory in response to a real-time flag in the commercial.

116. (New) The system of claim 113 wherein:
the control circuitry is further configured to retrieve the graphic advertisement from

local memory in response to a real-time vertical-blanking-interval flag in the commercial.

117. (New) The system of claim 111 wherein:
the system further comprises a remote server; and
the control circuitry is further configured to retrieve the graphic advertisement from the remote server.

118. (New) The system of claim 116 wherein:
the control circuitry is further configured to retrieve the graphic advertisement from the remote server according to a schedule.

119. (New) The system of claim 116 wherein:
the control circuitry is further configured to retrieve the graphic advertisement from the remote server in response to a real-time flag in the commercial.

120. (New) The system of claim 116 wherein:
the control circuitry is further configured to retrieve the graphic advertisement from the remote server in response to a real-time vertical-blanking-interval flag in the commercial.

121. (New) The system of claim 111 wherein:
the control circuitry is further

configured to enable the user to purchase a product or service.

122. (New) The system of claim 111 wherein:
the control circuitry is further configured to enable the user to purchase a product or service by directing the display device to display a point-of-sale window having information on the product or service in response to the command being received.

123. (New) The system of claim 111 wherein:
the control circuitry is further configured to enable the user to purchase a product or service by directing the display device to display a point-of-sale window having information on the product or service in response to the command being received, wherein the point-of-sale window also provides access to other products or services.

124. (New) A computer readable medium encoded with machine-readable instructions for use in presenting a user with a graphic advertisement in an interactive television program guide implemented on user television equipment, wherein television commercials and other television programming are transmitted to the user television equipment over a communications path from a distribution facility and are displayed for the user on the user television equipment, the machine-readable

instructions comprising:

providing the user with an opportunity to access interactive television program guide information from the interactive television program guide by displaying an icon that indicates the availability of the interactive television program guide information during the display of a television commercial associated with a given advertiser; and

displaying the interactive television program guide information and a graphic advertisement associated with the given advertiser in the interactive television program guide for the user when the user accesses the interactive television program guide information in response to the icon.

125. (New) The computer readable medium defined in claim 124 wherein the television commercial and the graphic advertisement are both branded with the same brand, the machine-readable instructions further comprising displaying the graphic advertisement branded with that brand on the user television equipment.

126. (New) The computer readable medium defined in claim 124, the machine-readable instructions further comprising retrieving the graphic advertisement from local memory.

127. (New) The computer readable medium defined in claim 124, the machine-readable instructions further comprising retrieving the graphic advertisement from a remote server.

128. (New) The computer readable medium defined in claim 124, the machine-readable instructions further comprising retrieving the graphic advertisement from local memory according to a schedule.

129. (New) The computer readable medium defined in claim 124, the machine-readable instructions further comprising retrieving the graphic advertisement from a remote server according to a schedule.

130. (New) The computer readable medium defined in claim 124, the machine-readable instructions further comprising retrieving the graphic advertisement from local memory in response to a real-time flag in the commercial.

131. (New) The computer readable medium defined in claim 124, the machine-readable instructions further comprising retrieving the graphic advertisement from a remote server in response to a real-time flag in the commercial.

132. (New) The computer readable medium defined in claim 124, the machine-readable instructions further

comprising retrieving the graphic advertisement from local memory in response to a real-time vertical-blanking-interval flag in the commercial.

133. (New) The computer readable medium defined in claim 124, the machine-readable instructions further comprising retrieving the graphic advertisement from a remote server in response to a real-time vertical-blanking-interval flag in the commercial.

134. (New) The computer readable medium defined in claim 124, the machine-readable instructions further comprising enabling the user to purchase a product or service using the interactive television program guide.

135. (New) The computer readable medium defined in claim 124, the machine-readable instructions further comprising enabling the user to purchase a product or service using the interactive television program guide by displaying a point-of-sale window having information on the product or service in response to a user input when the icon is displayed.

136. (New) The computer readable medium defined in claim 124, the machine-readable instructions further comprising enabling the user to purchase a product or service using the interactive television program guide by displaying a point-of-sale window having information on

the product or service in response to a user input when the icon is displayed, wherein the point-of-sale window also provides access to other products or services.